

New Orchestra Workshop Society

June 26, 1980

ADVANCE NOTICE: PRESS RELEASE

THE 2nd ANNUAL VANCOUVER CREATIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL

The VANCOUVER CREATIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL intends to cultivate and promote an understanding and appreciation of creative music by establishing in Vancouver, an annual presentation of performances and workshops by Canadian and International artists.

To understand the term CREATIVE MUSIC, one must look beyond cultural and stylistic differences to an idea of music that is devoted to the development of human and personal expression. This concern is a timeless one, common to all places, found in all the great musical traditions of the world. Creative Music acknowledges the teachings of the past and utilizes them according to their relevance to the cultural needs of the present.

The 2nd ANNUAL VANCOUVER CREATIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL will take place NOVEMBER 7, 8, and 9, and NOVEMBER 14, 15, and 16, 1980 at the ROBSON SQUARE THEATRE, ROBSON SQUARE, VANCOUVER, and the WESTERN FRONT LODGE, 303 E. 8th Ave., Vancouver.

The following artists are scheduled to perform:

from Vancouver

Trio Non Troppo
Paul Plimley
Al Neil
Bob Murphy
Druick/Ellis Phillips
Contemporary String Quartet
Don Druick
A-Group
Vancouver Creative Music Orchestra

from Victoria, B.C.

John Celona

from Toronto

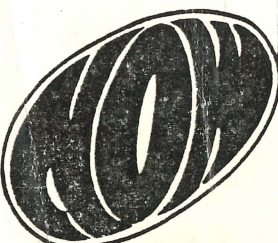
Bill Smith Ensemble
Maury Coles
CCMC
Udo Kasemetz
John Oswald

from Germany and South Africa

Peter Brotzmann
Harry Miller
Louis Muholo

from the U.S.

Joe McPhee
Vinny Golia
Seattle Composers and Improvisors Orchestra with Art Lande
Henry Kaiser
Darrell Devore



CANADIAN ENSEMBLES

New Orchestra Quintet
Up 'Til Now
New Orchestra Records NOR 001

Paul Cram - alto and tenor saxophones; Ralph Eppel - trombone and euphonium; Paul Plimley - piano; L.S. Lansall-Ellis - bass; Gregg Simpson - percussion.

10 X 10; Up 'Til Now; Terminal Shift; Delicate Chestnut Roll.

Bill Smith
Pick A Number
Onari 004

Bill Smith - soprano and soprano saxophones, alto clarinet; David Lee - bass, cello; David Prentice - violin.

Up (A Love Song) For Captain Robot; Little Boo; Bones & Giggles; Interludes.

The state of improvising ensembles in Canada is well represented by these two recordings. The two main strains that run through these performances are an avid assimilation of planet-wide activity and an interfacing and/or apposition of composition and improvisation. Where these recordings differ is in the cogency of the material and the ability of the musicians to forward their ideas without peril to the ensemble effort. In these respects, Bill Smith's trio (formerly the New Art Music Ensemble - N.A.M.E.) fares better than the New Orchestra Quintet. While the N.O.Q. seems to take more daring conceptual and structural risks, the abrupt juxtapositions and flaring tangents that punctuate "Up 'Til Now" have generally less effect than the deliberate thematic developments of "Pick A Number". L.S. Lansall-Ellis' **10 X 10** is an immediate example of how the

various jazz and new music components used falter in building a synergistic whole. Conspicuously absent is the emotional consistency of Smith's *Interludes*, a side-long excursion that bears the imprint of Anthony Braxton, to whom the piece is dedicated.

Despite this problem, "Up 'Til Now" reveals the New Orchestra Quintet as five able voices that occasionally coalesce for an exceptional performance. Paul Plimley's *Delicate Chestnut Roll* is such a performance. After an engaging freebop ensemble passage, Paul Cram delivers some tough tenor, supported incessantly by Lansall-Ellis and drummer Gregg Simpson. A smooth transition into a solo piano passage finds Plimley ruminating with such verve that his ample borrowings from Cecil Taylor go unnoticed. Ending his solo on tranquil turf, Plimley then leads the quintet through a sardonic passage that draws from Charles Mingus and Roscoe Mitchell's *Old*. Solid solos from trombonist Ralph Eppel and Lansall-Ellis ensue before the infectious opening passage wraps things up.

Given Bill Smith's editorial predilections over the years, it is not surprising that "Pick A Number" is far-reaching in concept and well-centered in performance. While the music of this formidable trio is shorn of the traditional rhythmic basis of jazz it has the momentum and immediacy of jazz that is primarily defined by rhythm. Written for Steve Lacy, who has purveyed this type of music for so many years, *Captain Robot* is a fine vehicle for the trio to explore both lead/support and collective areas of improvisation, as it circumvents the rough-edited feel of the N.O.Q.'s assemblages. Smith's soprano follows, for the most part, Lacy's splicing of short bursting phrases and longer undulating passages. As part of an impressive recording debut, violinist David Prentice seemingly descends from the stratosphere with pure tone and a sure sense for the well-placed phrase; his duet with Smith at the end of *Bones & Giggles* is excellent. Adding gravity and nuance to the piece, bassist/cellist David Lee intermittently propels the music with a dark rumbling that is brisk and elastic; Lee also puts in an exceptional performance (on cello) on *Bones & Giggles*.

These promising first recordings suggest that much of this activity in Canada is realized on a collective basis. Certainly, most of the finer moments on both albums — sections of *Terminal Shift* and the forementioned *Bones & Giggles* — occur when the collective basis is most evident. It is much too early to tell from this vantage if the differences in ideas and projections on these two albums stem only from the individuals or if the same kind of geographical factors that have shaped the music in the U.S. and Europe are also at play here. And, except for the recent extended visit of saxophonist Maury Coles to the N.O.Q.'s home turf of Vancouver, there is little to indicate that the itinerancy prevalent in the U.S. and Europe exists in Canada beyond domestic touring. Subsequently, the development of a Canadian music will suffer and gain from relative isolation. Not that this isolation is apparent on these recordings. Instead, these recordings seem to have benefited from the growing internationalism of the mus-

c, especially Smith's. What would seem to be a pertinent task for Canadian musicians at this point would be to enter the international arena and let the seeds sown at home bear fruit in other lands: Americans, especially, have a long tradition of this. Already possessing the ideas and musicianship that are the prerequisites, the N.O.Q. and the Smith/Lee/Prentice Trio are at that point where they should journey and bring home a Canadian music. — *Bill Shoemaker*
 (Both of these records are available from *Coda*; in addition, NOR 001 is distributed by Black Swan Records, 2936 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6K 1R2 Canada, from which single copies are available for \$7.00 each postpaid).